AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

- 1. (Currently Amended) A method of controlling an allocation of <u>packet</u>

 <u>transmission</u> priority to TCP packets within a switch after switch routing table entries have been established to set up a messaging connection and during ongoing use of such established eonnection to transmit packets thereover, said method comprising:
- a) determining whether a packet passing through said-established switch connection switch to be transmitted is a TCP control packet;
- b) assigning a packet transmission priority to such determined TCP control packets that is different to the priority of TCP data packets that such TCP control packets they control.
- 2. (Currently Amended) A method as in claim 1 in which the step (a) of determining whether the packet is a control packet comprises checking flag bits within the TCP header and establishing if any flag other than a PSH flag bit is set.
- 3. (Currently Amended) A method as in claim 2 in which packets having a flag bit other than PSH set are assigned an increased priority of packet transmission relative to those with the PHS flag bit set.
 - 4. (Currently Amended) A switch including:

logic for snooping a TCP header in a <u>TCP</u> packet being transported transmitted through said along an already set up switch connection in accordance with routing table entries and establishing whether said TCP packet is a TCP control packet; and

means for assigning a <u>packet transmisson</u> priority to said TCP packet dependent on whether it is a TCP control packet.

- 5. (Previously Presented) A switch as in claim 4 in which the logic for snooping the TCP header checks the flag bits within the TCP header and establishes whether any flag other than a PSH flag bit is set.
- 6. (Currently Amended) A switch as in claim 4 in which said means for assigning allocates an increased <u>packet transmission</u> priority to TCP packets having a flag bit other than PSH set.
- 7. (Currently Amended) A switch for the reception and transmission of data TCP packets including both control packets and other non-control packets each having a header conforming to the Transport Control Protocol (TCP), said switch including:

a multiplicity of ports for receiving and transmitting said TCP packets in accordance with previously established routing table entries;

means for allocating a <u>packet transmission</u> priority to TCP packets within said switch as they are being <u>transported transmitted</u> in accordance with said previously established routing table entries;

means for checking flag bits within the header of each of said TCP packets to determine whether a given TCP packet is a TCP control packet; and

means for assigning a <u>packet transmission</u> priority to said given TCP packet dependent on whether it is a TCP control packet.

8. (Currently Amended) A switch as in claim 7 in which:

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the said means for checking includes logic for snooping the TCP header establishes to establish whether any flag in said header other than a PSH flag bit is set, and

said means for assigning allocates an increased <u>packet transmission</u> priority to TCP packets having a set flag bit other than said PSH flag bit.